

**Remarks to the United Nations
Special Session on the World Drug
Problem in New York City**

June 8, 1998

Mr. Secretary-General, President Udovenko, Executive Director Arlacchi, distinguished fellow leaders. Today we join at this Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly to make common cause against the common threat of worldwide drug trafficking and abuse.

Let me begin by thanking my friend President Zedillo for his vision in making this session possible, and for his courageous resolve against drugs. And I thank all the nations represented here who are committed to fight for our children's future by fighting drugs together.

Ten years ago, the United Nations adopted a pathbreaking convention to spur cooperation against drug trafficking. Today, the potential for that kind of cooperation has never been greater, or more needed. As divisive blocs and barriers have been dismantled around the world, as technology has advanced and democracy has spread, our people benefit more and more from nations working and learning together. Yet the very openness that enriches our lives is also exploited by criminals, especially drug traffickers.

Today we come here to say no nation is so large and powerful that it can conquer drugs alone; none is too small to make a difference. All share a responsibility to take up the battle. Therefore, we will stand as one against this threat to our security and our future.

The stakes are high, for the drug empires erode the foundations of democracies, corrupt the integrity of market economies, menace the lives, the hopes, the futures of families on every continent. Let there be no doubt, this is ultimately a struggle for human freedom.

For the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. In virtually every country, we see the expansion of expressions of individual liberty. We cannot see it all squandered for millions of people because of a perverse combination of personal

weakness and national neglect. We have to prove to the drug traffickers that they are wrong. We are determined, and we can make a difference.

Nations have shown that with determined and relentless efforts, we can turn this evil tide. In the United States, drug use has dropped 49 percent since 1979. Recent studies show that drug use by our young people is stabilizing, and in some categories, declining. Overall cocaine use has dropped 70 percent since 1985. The crack epidemic has begun to recede. Last year, our Coast Guard seized more than 100,000 pounds of cocaine. Today, Americans spend 37 percent less on drugs than a decade ago. That means that over \$34 billion reinvested in our society, rather than being squandered on drugs.

Many other nations are making great strides. Mexico set records for eradication in 1997. Peruvian coca cultivation has been slashed 42 percent since 1995. Colombia's growing aerial eradication program has destroyed tens of thousands of hectares of coca. Thailand's opium poppy growth is steadily decreasing, this year alone down 24 percent.

The United States is also a partner in global law enforcement and interdiction efforts, fighting antidrug and—funding antidrug and crime training for more than 8,250¹ officials last year. In 1997 Latin American and Caribbean governments seized some 166 metric tons of cocaine. Better trained police, with improved information sharing, are arresting more drug traffickers around the world.

Joint information networks on suspicious financial transactions are working in dozens of countries to put the brakes on money laundering. By the end of the year 2000, the United States will provide assistance to an additional 20 countries to establish and strengthen these financial intelligence units. We must and we can deprive drug traffickers of the dirty money that fuels their deadly trade.

We are finding strength in numbers, from the antidrug alliance the Western Hemisphere forged at the recent Summit of the Americas, to the steps against drugs and crimes the G-8 leaders agreed to take last month. The U.N. International Drug Control

¹ White House correction.

Program, under Executive Director Arlacchi's leadership, is combating drug production, drug trafficking, and drug abuse in some of the most difficult corners of the world, while helping to make sure the money we spend brings maximum results. I applaud the UNDCP's goal of dramatically reducing coca and opium poppy cultivation by 2008. We will do our part in the United States to make this goal a reality.

For all the achievements of recent years, we must not confuse progress with success. The specter of drugs still haunts us. To prevail we must do more, with dynamic national strategies, intensified international cooperation, and greater resources.

The debate between drug supplying and drug consuming nations about whose responsibility the drug problem is has gone on too long. Let's be frank. This debate has not advanced the fight against drugs. Pointing fingers is distracting. It does not dismantle a single cartel, help a single addict, prevent a single child from trying and perhaps dying from heroin. Besides, the lines between countries that are supply countries, demand countries, and transit countries are increasingly blurred. Drugs are every nation's problem, and every nation must act to fight them on the streets, around the kitchen table, and around the world.

This is the commitment of the United States. Year after year, our administration has provided the largest antidrug budgets in history. Our request next year exceeds \$17 billion, nearly 6 billion of which will be devoted to demand reduction. Our comprehensive national drug control strategy aims to cut American drug use and access by half over the next 10 years, through strengthened law enforcement, tougher interdiction, improved treatment, and expanded prevention efforts. We are determined to build the drug-free America and to join with others to combat drugs around the world.

We believe attitudes drive actions. Therefore, we wage first the battle in the minds of our young people. Working with Congress and the private sector, the United States has launched a major antidrug youth media campaign. Now, when our children turn on the television, surf the Internet, or listen to the

radio, they will get the powerful message that drugs are wrong and can kill them.

I will be asking Congress to extend this program through 2002. With congressional support and matching dollars from the private sector, we will commit to a 5-year, \$2 billion public-private partnership to teach our children to stay off drugs.

Other nations, including Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil, are launching similar campaigns. I had the pleasure of talking with the President of Brazil about this at some length yesterday. I hope all our nations can work together to spread the word to children all around the world: Drugs destroy young lives; don't let them destroy yours.

The United States is also working to create a virtual university for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, using modern technology to share knowledge and experience across national borders. We will launch this effort next month in New Mexico, with an international training course on reducing drug demand. Government officials and other professionals from Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras will work with experts on drug abuse and gang prevention from the U.S. The course will be linked via satellite to the U.S. Information Agency's Worldnet system, so that anyone with access to Worldnet can tune in.

Our National Institute for Drug Abuse in the United States, which funds 85 percent of global research on drugs, will post on the Internet live videotapes of its drug prevention and treatment workshops. This means that anyone, anywhere, with access to a computer and modem—a parent whose child is addicted to drugs, a doctor trying to help, a researcher looking for a cure—anyone will be able to obtain the latest, most advanced medical knowledge on drugs.

Such sharing of information, experience, and ideas is more important than ever, and that is why I am especially pleased to announce the establishment of an international drug fellowship program that will enable professionals from all around the world to come to the United States and work with our drug fighting agencies. The focus will be on the

priorities of this special session: demand reductions, stimulants, precursors, money laundering, judicial cooperation, alternative development, and eradication of illicit crops.

These fellowships will help all of us. It will help our nations to learn from one another while building a global force of skilled and experienced drug crusaders.

Together we must extend the long arm of the law and the hand of compassion to match the global reach of this problem. Let us leave here determined to act together in a spirit of trust and respect, at home and abroad, against demand and supply, using all the tools at our disposal to win the global fight against drugs and build a safe and healthy 21st century for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; U.N. General Assembly President Hennady Udovenko; Pino Arlacchi, executive director, U.N. Drug Control Program; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; and President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Reception for Gubernatorial Candidate Barbara B. Kennelly in Westport, Connecticut June 8, 1998

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Let me first thank Martha Stewart for having us here. I had a wonderful time going through this wonderful enterprise, and I love the food. And I know it's all supposed to be light, but if you eat enough of it, it's still—[laughter]. It was a wonderful, wonderful lunch.

I think of the great following Martha has throughout the country; there's no telling how much she's broadened my base today by giving me a chance to come here. [Laughter] There will be millions of people listening to me that never paid any attention to me before just because I came here today. And I'm very grateful. [Laughter]

I want to thank two Members of the United States Congress from Connecticut, who are not up on this platform but are out

in the crowd, for being here today and for their service for you and our Nation—Congressman Maloney and Congressman Rosa DeLauro. Thank you for being here, so much, thank you. I thank our Democratic Party chair, Ed Marcus; your great attorney general and my old classmate and longtime friend, Richard Blumenthal. I thank him.

You all know I owe Connecticut a great deal. I mean, I came to law school here; I met Hillary here; I worked in Joe Duffy's campaign in 1970 and did a little work for Joe Lieberman, I've made friends that are still friends of mine forever. I actually have known both your Senators now for nearly 30 years. I knew them when all three of us were young, ungray, and, frankly, most of our friends would have been astonished to know how any of us turned out. [Laughter] And being friends with them has been a great experience. I've loved in later years being—especially, serving with Joe Lieberman in the Democratic Leadership Council. You all know how grateful I am to Senator Dodd for chairing our Democratic Party at a particularly challenging time. I also appreciate the fact that Chris Dodd will still play golf with me since Barbara Kennelly no longer has time to play golf with me. [Laughter] So I'm very thankful for that.

I'm going to tell you a story today. I'm going to do something highly impolitic involving Barbara Kennelly. This is impolitic but, as God as my witness, it is true. Last summer Barbara Kennelly called me, and she said, "I want to talk to you about running for Governor." I said, "Okay." I said, "Do you want me to tell you what you want to hear, or do you want me to be honest with you?" She said, "I want you to be honest with me; we've been friends a long time." So Barbara Kennelly came to Martha's Vineyard, where Hillary and Chelsea and I were on vacation, and we went out and played golf together, and then Barbara and her son came and had dinner with Hillary and me that night. And we talked about this. And I said, "Barbara, I was Governor for 12 years, and I loved it. A lot of people thought I ran for President because I was bored being Governor. I was happier on the day I left than the day I showed up. [Laughter] I loved the job."